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THE LARGE IDEA OF A SMALL COLLEGE

by

Ruth Unrau

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THE LARGE IDEA OF A SMALL COLLEGE

Part I - THE IDEA

(Ruth Unrau)

The stage is bare, but has been arranged for acting at three levels. Down right are three stools. Three men come out, each with a copy of The Story of Bethel College, and take their places on the stools.

Student: Center, white shirt, black tie, black trousers.

Faculty: Right, dark suit.

Constituent: Left, bib overalls, white shirt, black tie.

Const: (Hefting his book) I think this is quite an assignment for the three of us to read this whole book tonight. It has 632 pages.

Stud: Oh, I don't think we are expected to read the whole book. Just selected parts.

Fac: (To the audience. Faculty is likely to wax pedagogical at the drop of a book.) Perhaps some of you have noticed a new trend in dramatics. People sit on the stage on stools and read. Just read. Charles Laughton reads from Shakespeare; Judith Anderson reads poetry, and so forth. We are going to read from The Story of Bethel College by P. J. Wedel and Edmund G. Kaufman.

Stud: Don't you think this will get pretty dull? (Reads) "During the 80's of the last century, the boom in Kansas affected every town and hamlet." How long do you think the students will sit through that? Anyway the freshmen.

Const: Maybe along with the reading, we could act out a few scenes.

Fac: Of course! Of course! Visual education! We won't have any big name stars, but there could be lots of extras: the cast will include the faculty, staff, students, alumni, townspeople, and constituency. Especially the constituency.

Stud: If we would add a little music, this could turn out to be as big a box office hit as West Side Story or My Fair Lady. Say, this might even be a multi-million dollar extravaganza.

Fac: Perhaps before we go any further we should introduce ourselves. I am a faculty member. My name is Schmidt. To my knowledge there have been ten faculty members named Schmidt associated with this school. (To student) You, of course, are a student. Do you have a name?

Stud: Just call me Menno.

Fac: (Turning to Const.) I have not quite determined what part you play.

Const: I am a constituent. But don't let these overalls fool you. While I have a long rural background, I do pretty well as a business man, a preacher, teacher, or doctor. But I farm about half the time.

Stud: What's your name?

Const: My name is Goering, but I was a Schrag on my mother's side, and my grandparents were named Schmidt, Voth, Stucky, Friesen, Penner, Hiebert, and--

Stud: We get the idea.

Const: and Klassen.

Fac: Spelled with a K or a C?

Const: Yes. Spelled with a K and a C.

Stud: (Briskly) Well, let's put this show on the road, or we'll be here all night.

Fac: What are we going to call this production?

Const: The book is entitled The Story of Bethel College. Isn't that all right?

Stud: Oh, that sounds so ordinary, not exciting at all.

Fac: We could call it the Wonderful World of Bethel College.

Stud: As long as you are borrowing from television, why not Saints and Sinners of Bethel College?

Fac: Oh, that would not do at all. There are already those who suspect that there are sinners there.

Const: Doctors are doing pretty well this season. Couldn't you work Dr. Casey or Dr. Kildare into the title some way?

Stud: I have it! The Wonderful World of Drs. Wedel, Kliever, Langenwalter, Hartzler, Kaufman, Wedel, Fretz, and Neufeld.

Const: That certainly should cover the subject. I think we are ready to read. I will begin.

Stud: What do you say we skip the first part about the European backgrounds of the Mennonites and the Wadsworth and Emmatal schools and the Halstead Seminary?

Fac: Background is important, young man. How can one understand what Bethel College is unless you understand the background?

Const: But we do need to limit this to one evening's program. Let's begin with Chapter IV, page 46.

"During the eighties of the last century the 'boom' in Kansas affected every town and hamlet. It struck with a violence that threw some cities completely off balance. Prices of city lots soared to fabulous heights; cities made highly attractive offers to secure colleges and industrial establishments. Colleges sprang up like mushrooms, and--"

Stud: Pardon me, you read very well, but I think it is time for some action.

Const: All right. This will be a street scene in uptown Newton.



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Fac: What language will our actors use? German, of course, was the language spoken. (To student) Can you speak German?

Stud: Yah.

Fac: (To Const.) Can you?

Const: (In German) Of course, naturally. (Gewiss natuerlich)

Fac: Then the play must be given in German.

Stud: (Looking through the script) Evidently the scriptwriter can't speak German. Her vocabulary seems limited to borscht and zwiebach.

Const: I guess the writer isn't Mennonite. Well, so be it.
The time is April, 1887.

(Lights go up to a scene on center stage.)

Fannie: Cousin Lena! What brings you to town today?

Lena: David had to come to that Newton College Association meeting, all the way from Halstead in the spring wagon in this mud.

Fannie: Ach, yes, today they open those bids. I hope the north addition gets the college. For those from Alexanderwohl it would be so much handier.

Lena: Well, we Halstead people favor the south addition, but I can't say it really makes any difference to me.

Fannie: To me either. For college my children won't be ready for years. And college anyway. That's thinking pretty high out. Third grade has been good enough for me and their pa.

Lena: But David says we must think of our church. We have to educate our leaders.

Fannie: Just what kind of college would it be? Has any college said it would start up in Newton.

Lena: I don't think they actually have a college willing to come right now. There is just all this fuss between the north addition and the south addition, and David is interested in getting the Mennonites to start a college.

Fannie: I hear talk about Halstead Seminary moving to Newton. Is there any truth in that?

Lena: Oh, I don't know. David is on the school committee of the Conference, you know, and they talk about a college in Newton or Hutchinson. They even have a name picked out. Bethel College. Halstead Seminary students would continue their education at Bethel.

(David joins them)

David: Hello, Fanny. How are you folks?

Lena: Well, here you are already, David. How did the bidding turn out?

- David: The folks from the south addition got it. I guess the Newton College will be located out there by the railroad tracks. Now all they need to do is to find a college.
- Fannie: As I was just saying to Lena, our children won't be going to any college. To be a good farmer, a college education you don't need, thank goodness.
- David: And you are sure that all your eight children are going to be farmers? We need teachers and preachers and missionaries, too, you know.
- Fannie: For my boys, the Halstead Seminary will be good enough if they ever get any such ideas.
- David: Oh, but the seminary is too small. Why, your eight boys, if they were to come all at once, would have to sit two to a chair. No, Fannie, it is time we thought bigger than the seminary.
- Fannie: And in terms of more money, too, no doubt. I hear your seminary is in debt again.
- David: I am afraid so. What we need is an endowment fund.
- Fannie: Ach, Lena, your David talks too big for me. An endowment fund!
- Lena: He just means they need enough money so they won't have to be borrowing always.
- Fannie: Well, seminary or no, I have to get home. All this talk isn't getting my potatoes peeled.
- (They say their goodbyes and move off and the lights shift back to the readers.)
- Fac: The School Committee of the Conference met a few days later on April 20, 1887.
- (Lights pick out group around a table.)
- Daniel: What's so important that we had to have a meeting with all the spring work to be done?
- David: Those people in Newton from the north addition found out that we were considering a permanent location for a college and they have made us an offer.
- Levi: But the Newton College Association has already chosen the south addition. Do we Mennonites want to start a college in Newton if they already have a college?
- David: They don't have a college, and chances are they won't. I've an idea that if we moved the seminary to Newton, we would be the Newton college. In fact, the chairman of the Association encouraged us to go ahead. As you may know, last year they thought the Methodists might start a college in Newton, but the Methodists chose Winfield instead.
- Levi: Well, what are those north Newton people offering?

David: Land worth \$85,000 and \$15,000 in cash, a total of \$100,000. We have to build a \$50,000 building and start a first-class college with an endowment fund that will maintain the college.

Daniel: Do they have that money on hand? When do we start?

David: No, they don't have it right now. They would raise it and hand it over in five installments with 10 per cent down when we accept the offer and 15 per cent when we get the basement built.

Daniel: Sounds like a good offer.

David: We would raise the money we need by selling off the land in lots for building homes. The way prices are right now, I don't see how we could lose.

Levi: It sounds good, but I wonder about that \$85,000. That sounds like a boom price to me. Are there lots of people willing to buy that land?

Daniel: Hutchinson made us a good offer, too.

David: Not so good as this one. I'm afraid that if we don't take it, some other denomination will. We want a college; this is a good offer. There is always a risk in any venture. If we believe that we must educate our young people if we are to have leaders, we must act now. We are here in the middle of a Mennonite settlement. It is only reasonable that Mennonites should have a school here. With this offer I think we can see the guiding hand of a kind Providence pointing the way.

Daniel: If this seems like such a good opportunity, let's have a conference meeting.

David: Now here's our problem. The committee of the north addition wants its answer by May 1. This is April 20. We will have to have a conference session not later than April 27.

Levi: (Rises) Well, let's get to the conference officers and pass the word to the congregations.

(Light fades.)

Const: (Reading) The Kansas Conference responded to this call with practically a full representation. The School Committee presented the proposal, asking for prompt action since the offer would expire within five days.

(The Chairman of the conference presides at a podium and the School Committee: Goerz, Levi, Daniel, sit nearby.)

Chair: Henry Ewert has the floor. (Ewert is standing in front row of audience.)

Ewert: I would say to Brother Goerz that this is an important matter, the starting of a college, and while I agree that it is a good policy to strike while the iron is hot, we are being asked to act with too much haste, which we may regret.

Claassen: (Jumps up from chair on other side of the audience.) I agree. And I wonder about the soundness of this offer. It is generous on the part of the city, but is our Conference willing to shoulder this financial burden. We all know how hard it has been to raise money for the Halstead Seminary.

(Several people stand to be heard.)

Chair: The chair recognizes August Quiring.

Quiring: Do we have a moral right to assume this obligation: "To build and maintain a first-class college in Newton." We don't have an endowment to give the college a fixed income. All the money would have to be raised from free will offerings. The whole idea is impossible.

Ewert: A committee from the city of Halstead approached me this morning and asked that we consider that town as a site for the college.

Claassen: And there is that offer from Hutchinson, too.

(The Chairman and the School Committee confer in pantomime while the reader goes on.)

Const: The longer the question was debated, the more hopeless the situation seemed. A feeling of depression and hopelessness prevailed.

Goerz: (Comes forward to the podium.) My personal feeling at this point is that a rejection of this offer of the city of Newton involves a risk so great that future generations might well consider it as one of the great blunders of Mennonitism.

Now I have a proposal to make. In view of the inability of the delegates to arrive at a decision, I request that the Conference give its consent to the organization of a private Mennonite association which would undertake to build and maintain a college in accordance with the terms of the Newton offer.

Claassen: Who would pay the bills?

Goerz: This association would take all the risks. If the school is a failure, the association will take the blame. If the undertaking is a success, then the Conference should have the blessings.

(There is silence. The School Committee whisper together.)

Ewert: This plan seems to me to be the only solution to our dilemma.

Claassen: The association takes the risks. We can wait to see what happens then. Yes, I think this is a good idea.

Ewert: (Goes to platform.) I would like to be a member of the association. How do I become a member? (Other delegates from the floor go up to platform and gather around the table while the reader continues.)

Const: By the close of the day, a sufficient number of brethren had expressed a willingness to form a corporation, and thirty-three members signed the charter.

The charter was filed with the Secretary of State of Kansas on May 23, 1887.

Goerz: (Rises and reads.) Membership in the Corporation shall be restricted to individuals, congregations, and conferences of the Mennonite Church of North America who donate \$100 or more to the endowment fund of Bethel College. Such a donation entitles the donor to one vote in the meetings of the Corporation.

(Lights on stage fade.)

Const: The foundation was laid for a well-ordered, well-regulated institution. Subsequent developments showed that the charter was not without its defects.

The new Board of Directors named in the charter lost no time setting the wheels in motion.

(Lights go up to show Krehbiel, Warkentin, Ewert, Goerz at the table on another part of the stage.)

Krehbiel: Shall we hear the report from the group who has been visiting college buildings in the state.

Warkentin: We have been studying the college buildings at Southwestern College and Kansas Wesleyan. The Lutherans have a good building at Lindsborg. McPherson College and Sterling College showed us their plans. We have many ideas here and we want you brethren to look at these sketches.

Ewert: Of course it will have to have offices for the principal and recitation rooms.

Krehbiel: A ladies reception room and a dining room.

Ewert: Ladies? I hadn't thought about ladies at Bethel College.

Goerz: A library and a chapel, of course.

Ewert: I like this plan for a music room and art gallery.

Warkentin: I think we should try to get electricity for lighting, or at least gas.

Ewert: What is wrong with kerosene lamps? Your ideas are too fancy.

Const: And so all these ideas were incorporated into the first plans. But the first contractor withdrew and it was Mr. Proudfoot who drew the floor plans for the present Main Building.

Fac: The donated building site was a pleasant expanse of prairie of twenty acres about a mile north of Newton. The building itself was located on a slight elevation that has since come to be known as Mt. Hebron. A small stream flowing through the site received the name of Kidron.

Stud: Progress was slow. At a meeting of the Board a year later, the financial problems were of great concern.

(Back to the Board meeting.)

- Krehbiel: Brethren, I sympathize with your impatience. Things are moving very slowly, but we must keep going.
- Ewert: And we must not go into debt. I will not vote for any proposal that will have us spend money we do not have in the cash box. I say, let the work stand still until we collect the money.
- Goerz: It is disappointing that the people are not buying the land more eagerly. I had thought that surely they would want to invest in this choice location that the city donated.
- Warkentin: And we are not getting nearly what we thought we would get for the lots. People aren't willing to pay so much for land anymore.
- Goerz: I am sorry to report that we have been able to raise only a third of the cash subscribed by the citizens of Newton in the original contract. We are gratified, however, by the many good friends we do have in the city of Newton and by the response we have received from our Mennonite congregations.
- Warkentin: We believe in this cause, do we not, brethren? I propose that we enter into these contracts for completing the basement and I make a motion that we protect our treasurer by making ourselves responsible for the money thus advanced.
- Krehbiel: Do I hear a second to that motion?
- Ewert: I second Brother Warkentin's motion.
- Krehbiel: How do we vote, brethren?
- Group: We'll agree. I say aye.
- Goerz: Then I believe we are ready to plan for the laying of the cornerstone. This will certainly be a milestone in the history of Mennonite education, and we want our congregations to remember this as an auspicious occasion. Would October be a good time?
- Krehbiel: But Brother Goerz, you remember that October is a very busy time. Both the Kansas Conference and the Western District Conference in Iowa are having meetings then.
- Ewert: Such a fast moving world. The calendar is just too full.
- Goerz: (Takes paper from his pocket.) What do you think of this plan? I could go East next month and raise money for Bethel College in the other districts. Also, if the Santa Fe would give visitors a reduction in the price of tickets, we might get visitors from the East to come for the cornerstone laying and then go on to the conferences.
- Warkentin: Brother David, you are always thinking ahead of us.
- Krehbiel: And always good ideas. Well, let's put our heads together and plan the program. How many people do we expect? A thousand, two thousand?
- Goerz: Let's not set our sights too low. (Draws a paper from another pocket.) How does this sound to you?

(Lights fade)

- Const: The crowd that gathered on October 12, 1888 for the cornerstone laying was estimated at 2,500 and the program was held in a large tent. Lunch was served by the Women's Society, and an 85 voice choir from the surrounding churches provided music.
- Fac: There were addresses of welcome, sermons, and much singing. Rev. S. F. Sprunger, from Berne, Indiana, preached the dedicatory sermon.
- (Sprunger speaks from podium.)
- Sprunger: I take for my text for this important occasion I Corinthians 3:11 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ."
- Brethren, we believe that Bethel College has a good foundation. We have behind us the experiences of the Wadsworth and the Halstead schools. We have enjoyed the liberal support of the people of Newton. Our own Mennonite denomination has rallied to this cause from across the nation. With financial success already achieved, half of the endowment fund having already been secured, we can consider that we have a solid, durable foundation.
- But, dear friends, is it not more necessary that we also have spiritual as well as a material foundations for such an enterprise. A Christian institution builds for eternity. So long as this foundation is Jesus Christ, so long will this institution be secure and continue to endure.
- And now I would like to have Brother Welty lead us in a hymn.
- (The audience is asked to stand to sing a song that will be printed on their programs.)
- Fac: Rev. A. B. Shelly from Pennsylvania, President of the General Conference, laid the cornerstone.
- Stud: An offering was taken for the building fund, and in the afternoon lots were offered for sale, 10 per cent discount if paid for with cash. In the evening the first annual meeting of the Bethel College Corporation was held. The membership of the Corporation was 130.
- Const: All this took place on October 12, 1888. Probably nobody present at the cornerstone laying guessed that it would be five years before they would be invited back for the formal opening of the school.
- Fac: There were a number of reasons why it took five years for Bethel College to become a going concern. The first, of course, was financial.
- (Lights come up on stage.)
- Goerz: You see, Brother Dyck, we finally had to go into debt for \$3,000 to finish the basement of the Main Building. We are very anxious to pay off this debt, and until we do we will sell lots around the building site for one-third of their appraised value. This is a real bargain in real estate.
- Dyck: (Leans on his scythe.) But what would I do with a lot next door to the Main Building? I have a farm out here at Alexanderwohl, and my children are still in elementary school. Maybe someday they will go to Bethel, but I can't worry about that now.

Goerz: Maybe you would be more interested in contributing to the Endowment Fund. We feel that we must have \$50,000 on hand before we can open the doors of Bethel College.

Dyck: Now I don't understand that. Why can't the students pay for the expenses of the college? All that money collected ahead of time, just lying there.

Goerz: But it won't lie idle. We learned from the experience with the Halstead Seminary that we must have an endowment fund that can be invested. We can't ask the students to pay for all the expenses of the school. Brother Dyck, I know that you believe in the cause of higher education and that you will want your children to be educated in a Mennonite school. Would you consider making a contribution to this cause which will mean so much to future generations of young people.

Dyck: Yah, I believe in it, but I just don't have any cash money. The wheat looks good, but cash I won't have for six months.

Goerz: Of course, right now the cash would be the most desirable, but many people like you are contributing promissory notes which they will pay when they have the cash.

Dyck: That so? How long do they run?

Goerz: Well, you could sign a note that is interest-bearing and does not become due as long as the interest is paid promptly. You could pay it off at any time.

We have another type of note to be paid by installments, and another that is non-interest bearing until the day Bethel College has its official opening.

Dyck: Interest-bearing, non-interest bearing, installment bearing, and trouble bearing. How would it be if I gave you 50 cents now and a pledge to pay \$50 by the time the school opens? I think that is the best I can do.

Goerz: We will be very grateful. We depend on many small gifts from our many friends such as you rather than a few large gifts. Although if you know of anyone who would like to donate a large amount of money, I would be glad to talk to him.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: Then there was another problem: The average Mennonite was not against elementary education, but a four-year college that might be worldly, that would take their young people away from the farm, and that would mix them with who-knows-what other people, even other kinds of Mennonites?

(Two women knit and visit.)

Fannie: Yah, Herman made a contribution to the college, but I'm not sure I would have. Sure, elementary school so they can read and write and figure how many bushels of wheat to a load, but why should our children go to college and get a worldly education. What is the good of all that?

Sarah: I hear they want to teach rhetoric and Latin and biology. It will make their heads too big for their hats.

- Fannie: Now maybe a short course for teachers. We have to have teachers.
- Sarah: And a short course for Bible study wouldn't hurt anybody.
- Fannie: And probably the missionaries need some training, a few months maybe.
- Sarah: But not too much. Missionaries and preachers should preach from inspiration, I always say. The Lord puts words in their mouths when they get up to speak if they are really called.
- Fannie: But a four-year college! Too much like the world. How can you live a quiet life away from the world if you have a fancy education.
- Sarah: Well, I don't think we have much to worry about. Right now the only scholars at Bethel are rabbits and prairie snakes. A monument to real Mennonite stupidity, my man calls it.
- (Lights fade.)
- Const: Another problem that stared the new board in the face from the very beginning was the relationship of the new institution to the Halstead Seminary.
- (Lights go up to show a street meeting with Thiessen and Goerz.)
- Thiessen: Brother Goerz, set me right if I'm wrong, but won't Bethel College be in competition with the Halstead Seminary?
- Goerz: That's not our plan, Brother Thiessen. Bethel College should supplement the Seminary. Students will come to Bethel from the Seminary to get further training.
- Thiessen: I look at it this way: I am willing to give money for the college, but not if we must sacrifice the old for the new. If you offer the same subjects, I am afraid you are competing. We can't afford to have two schools this close to each other offering the same curriculum.
- Goerz: You are right about that. The Conference cannot afford two schools if they perform the same function. No, the Halstead Seminary and Bethel must work hand in hand, the seminary serving as a preparatory school for Bethel.
- Thiessen: The Seminary is the Conference school, not so, Brother Goerz?
- Goerz: Right, Brother Thiessen, and Bethel College is a private Mennonite undertaking.
- (Lights fade.)
- Fac: But the problems of the Halstead Seminary were many and included a growing deficit. In 1892 when the Kansas Conference merged with the Western District Conference, this resolution was adopted.
- (Lights on podium.)
- Goerz: "The Conference ceases with the close of the school year 1892-93 to operate its Seminary in the expectation that the Bethel College Corporation will assume and carry on school matters in accord with the intentions of the Conference."

(Lights fade.)

Const: The idea that the two schools could exist side by side was realized to be impracticable. For many years to come, Bethel would have to offer college preparatory work.

(On a backdrop of the North Newton map, Student places the silhouettes of the buildings named.)

Fac: And so in 1893 three of the Halstead buildings were purchased by Bethel College and moved to the campus: Students Home occupied the site where Memorial Hall now stands, Western Home was immediately west of it, and the Dining Hall stood where we now have the Library. Dining Hall is now known as Maple Hall and sits west of the Highway.

The sale of the buildings by the Halstead Seminary enabled them to liquidate their deficit, and thus that chapter of Mennonite education closed.

(Mr. and Mrs. Goerz move on stage against the backdrop.)

Goerz: You see, Lena, it did not come as fast as we thought it would, but now Bethel College is ready to open. With that extra twenty acres we bought, and those buildings from Halstead, we now have a college with four buildings and forty acres.

Lena: Why all that land, David? Whatever will the college do with forty acres? Grow wheat, maybe, and raise pigs?

Goerz: No, Lena, we will build a town. We will lay out thirty acres in streets and building lots. It was not for nothing that in Russia I learned the trade of surveyor.

Lena: Who will live in the new buildings? The Main Building seems so big, I thought everyone could live there.

Goerz: Oh, we are already crowded. The men will live in the Students Building and Western Home, and the ladies in the Main Building.

Lena: Should I go over and give it a good cleaning? I'm afraid those girls won't like it to find birds and rabbits in their rooms when they move in.

Goerz: I'm glad we decided to leave off the fourth floor and spire. The building has a fine appearance this way. And it cost only \$37,000 instead of the \$50,000 we had planned on.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: The building was to have been ready in the fall of 1892, but the opening of Bethel College had to wait another year. Even with this additional time, work moved so slowly that it seemed impossible to have the building ready in time. Even though neither the Main Building nor the Dining Hall was quite ready, nevertheless the dedicatory services were held and school opened as planned on September 20, 1893.

(Lights on stage.)

Stud: (Looks up from his book.) I'll bet somebody said it then, just as somebody has said it on the opening day of school every year since then:

Menno: (Wandering across stage, looking about.) Carpenters, paper hangers and painters! Doesn't look like the place is ready for school to begin.

Stud: This rush to get the campus ready in time for school has become one of the traditions of Bethel College.

Fac: (Peering over his shoulder.) Does the book say that?

Stud: No, I was ad libbing from experience.

Const: In spite of stormy weather, a large crowd of a thousand persons turned out for the dedication of the building on September 20, 1893. They came from as far away as 30 miles.

(Led by Goerz, Fanny, Sarah, Dyck, Thiessen, and Ewert come from left. Although women carry the scene, men make appropriate comments.)

Goerz: Yes, we consider this hall quite spacious. But in a few years from now, I doubt if we will think it is too large. To the east here are the Principal's living quarters, a temporary arrangement, we hope.

Fannie: Those doors on the west side, where do they lead?

Goerz: Those are students' quarters. As soon as we get more dormitory space, we will move them out and use those rooms for offices.

Sarah: (Peering back into present public relations office.) And what is this enormous hall for. Surely, your student body will not fill this room.

Goerz: In time, Sister, in time. The literary society will meet here and we will have student chapels. Come let us look at the basement.

(They move off and come back on almost immediately.)

As you see, the arrangement of rooms is the same as upstairs. This southwest room is for the music department. The other rooms are for student quarters. You see our heating plant here, and there is storage space for coal under the front steps. The building is very economically planned.

Fannie: (Peering back into student lounge.) But this room is empty. My, so much space.

Goerz: That will be the commercial department. We have not as yet engaged an instructor.

Sarah: Brother Goerz, where is your office? I understand you are the business manager.

Goerz: Yes, I will handle the financial affairs, but my office is downtown, where I have other business interests. Now shall we go up to the second floor?

(They leave and come back on.)

This is our chapel.



Sarah: What lovely windows.

Goerz: We are quite pleased with them. They are of cathedral glass and the designs are very symbolic. You see, we have included space for a pipe organ back there, and we hope some day to get proper seats.

Sarah: (Aside to Fannie.) Did he say cathedral glass? Have we fallen into apostasy?

Fannie: Stained glass does not belong in a Mennonite building.

Goerz: Back here, over the front steps, we have the library. As you can see, we have pitifully few books. And the four rooms on each side of the building are the classrooms.

Fannie: What is to be seen on the third floor. Although you surely don't expect the students to climb that many steps.

Goerz: As yet, the third floor is unfinished, but yes, we will have classrooms up there. Shall we go out to the tent for refreshment?

Sarah: (Lingering to look around while others follow Goerz out.) Much too large! They will never use all this space. What a waste of money.

Fannie: A wandering after false gods, I would say. I hear that some of the classes will be given in English. That is not Mennonite. That is not even Christian!

Stud: (Back to the book.) Thus many people came and expressed themselves, but the most prevalent feeling was one of gratitude and hopefulness.

Const: The idea had become a reality. Many men had worked hard to see Bethel College become an accomplished fact, but none so hard as David Goerz, rightly called the founder of Bethel College. He became the business manager and remained in that position until 1909 when he resigned because of failing health.

Fac: Equally dedicated to the cause were Bernhard Warkentin and J. J. Krehbiel, co-founders of Bethel. Warkentin served as treasurer of the Board and Krehbiel as its president for many years.

Some interpreters insist that history is written in terms of great men. These three men, indeed, influenced the history of the Mennonite church.

Welty: Shall we sing as a congregation the first verse of: "The Work Is Thine."

(Curtain closes as Welty leads the audience in singing.)

Part II - THE C. H. WEDEL ADMINISTRATION

(Curtain opens to show six men around a table. The readers are in their places.)

Fac: Let us take a look at the faculty of this new college. (Each acknowledges his introduction.)

C. H. Wedel accepted the principalship only with reluctance. He was a man of fine intellect and brilliant scholarship, but he found little joy in the details of administrative work. Being passionately devoted to his field of biblical studies, he was able to inspire his students with his own enthusiasm and love of learning.

B. A. Lehman of Berne was teacher of mathematics and natural sciences. H. D. Penner from Hillsboro was instructor in elementary branches, both English and German. B. F. Welty of Berne was teacher of instrumental and vocal music. David Goerz was business manager. G. A. Haury was teacher of English. He was to give 33 years of service to Bethel College.

Five faculty members, a business manager and sixty students. This was Bethel College in the fall of 1893.

The agenda of a faculty meeting during those first years might have covered many topics.

Wedel: First let us consider the student load.

Welty: Excuse me, should I take the minutes in German or English?

Wedel: I think in German, as that would probably be the easiest language to express ourselves in.

Penner: Brethren, I wonder if our tuition is too high. With tuition at \$25 a year, that will make the cost of attending school \$95 to \$110 a year. Can we continue to attract students when the cost is so high?

Goerz: Education is a worthwhile investment, Brother Penner, even if it must come high.

Wedel: Back to the subject of the student load. Are we agreed that students can carry 18 to 24 hours a week and the faculty can teach a load of 25 to 30 hours?

Welty: I think the students can do it, and we want to keep them busy, but that is a heavy task for the faculty. How can we do a good job of teaching when we have to spread ourselves so thin?

Goerz: I agree. It is too much to ask of a teacher. It will take real dedication to teach under such circumstances. As soon as the college is on its feet financially, we must reduce the faculty load.

Wedel: The Board of Directors is of the opinion that a university graduate should be able to teach anything and that he needs little preparation to teach his daily classes.

Welty: Obviously the members of the Board are not teachers.

Wedel: Speaking of finances, we have here a strange request that we need to consider. I don't know just how to handle it. A friend of the college has left the college in his will the magnificent sum of \$4,000.

All: Fine. What excellent good fortune.

Wedel: However, there is the stipulation that no "Prohibition" be taught at Bethel College for twenty years. Can we accept such a bequest?

(Silence)

Penner: I always vote the dry ticket, myself.

Goerz: Do we offer a course in Prohibition?

Wedel: No.

Goerz: Do we intend to offer a course in Prohibition?

Wedel: No, of course not.

Welty: We wouldn't know whether to teach it in German or English if we did.

Goerz: Do we not, as a college, subscribe to the biblical teaching on Temperance?

Wedel: Yes, I'm sure we do.

Goerz: Then I think with all good conscience that we can accept the \$4,000 bequest.

All: Agreed.

Wedel: (Beaming) Very good. We will go on with the agenda.

Lehman: Could I voice a complaint at this point?

Wedel: You may be heard, Brother Lehman.

Lehman: I find that the janitor service is, to say the least, inadequate.

Welty: It's lousy.

Wedel: (Sighs) Yes, gentlemen. It is a subject that the Board has had under consideration a number of times already this year. I will give them your concerns.

(Faculty continues in pantomime during next few speeches.)

Stud: This seems to have been a perennial problem. It was frequently discussed at Board meetings.

Fac: Are you ad libbing again?

Stud: It says that right here in black and white. Page 113.

Wedel: Let us go on. Campus rules. Brother Welty, will you read those we have already formulated.

Welty: 1. Time of students should be carefully budgeted. Since our time is in the Lord's hands, it behooves us to use it in His honor and for our benefit. Students shall rise at 5:00 and retire at 10:00, or a half hour later with permission of the principal. Morning devotions are at 7:00 and evening devotions at 9:00.

2. There will be no smoking, card playing, or joining of secret societies. Students will not read harmful novels or cultivate the society of immoral persons.

3. There will be no loud talking or singing or disturbing noises after 9:00 p.m.

Haury: I wonder, Brother Wedel, if anything could be done about the bathtub situation.

Wedel: (Blankly) The bathtub situation, Brother Haury?

Haury: Surely you have noticed the keen enjoyment the boys get in rolling their galvanized bathtubs down the stairs.

Penner: The clatter is deafening, and nobody ever knows who pushed the offending tub.

Wedel: We must all try to be alert to these infractions of quiet hours. Won't you continue, Brother Welty.

Welty: 4. Men and women must not play together or go out together except on permission from the principal.

5. Every student is expected to attend Sunday services at 10:00 and the evening prayer meeting at 7:00 p.m.

6. The library will be used by the boys and girls on alternate evenings. They shall not be allowed to use the library together.

Lehman: I don't think that rule is working out well. I have to make assignments for the girls one day and for the boys another. And I hear complaints that with all the noise of the students living in the Main Building, it is impossible for the students to study in their rooms.

Penner: And they say that even in the library it is not very quiet, since we have only student supervisors.

Wedel: Perhaps further consideration should be given to that rule. Read on, Brother Welty.

Welty: 7. Violators of the regulations are to be admonished in the spirit of love. A second offense will be followed by a second admonition. If this fails, the student is to be dismissed.

Wedel: Are there additional rules that we should--

Menno: (Bursts into room.) Beg your pardons, professors, but there is a fire.

All: A fire!

Menno: The coal under the front steps is on fire from spontaneous combustion.

(All rush out with cries of alarm.)

Const: We will excuse the professors so that they can help put out the fire. This was only one of similar occurrences in later years.

Fac: The faculty found that much of their time was taken up with faculty meetings concerned with the problems of discipline. They complained of indolence, dishonesty, smoking, attending a program in town without permission, card-playing, irregular class attendance, skipping chapel, neglect of work, raiding of lunch baskets, requests for inter-collegiate athletics.

Stud: Students complained about the poor lighting in their rooms, the lack of sanitary sewage disposal, absence of physical education, and of the long and dirty walk to town.

Fac: C. H. Wedel was president from 1893 to 1910, a period of 17 years. What happened to the school during that time?

Const: It grew.

(Student fastens silhouettes of the buildings on the backdrop as the Const. names the buildings.)

The physical plant started with the Main Building, Western Home, Students Home, and Dining Hall, in 1893.

Fac: In 1895 a group of friends built the Ladies Cottage for women, later called Elm Cottage. This was located in the park across from the Main Building.

Const: Another group of friends from Minnesota built the Minnesota Home on Minnesota Avenue in 1899. It cost less than \$2,000 and housed 16 students, men from Minnesota getting the preference of rooms. It was later moved and rebuilt into the Music Hall.

Fac: The David Goerz Home was built in 1893 and later purchased by the college.

Const: The Thierstein Home, originally built by Pres. C. H. Wedel in 1899 will soon be moved to make way for the Fine Arts Building.

Fac: And C. Wirkler built a home in 1898 which came to be known as the Krehbiel Home and is now occupied by Dean Meyer.

Const: The Newton Republican wrote in those early days, "The Main Building can be seen for miles," and it could be, for it stood out on open prairie with no trees around it. H. O. Kruse drew a plat for tree planting and in the next three years 475 trees were planted. Each student paid \$1 for the privilege of planting his tree.

Fac: In 1903 a Janitor's home was built in an effort to alleviate the difficulty of getting a good janitor.

Const: A recurrent theme in this book is the "congested housing situation." In 1908 Carnegie Hall materialized, the result of a gift of \$10,000 from Andrew Carnegie, subject to the condition that a like amount be raised for the endowment fund.

(Student comes back to his stool.)

Fac: Along with the building were extensive modernization projects.

- Const: In the opening year of the college, a cinder walk was laid from the campus to Newton, and in 1908 this was replaced by a cement walk.
- Fac: In 1899 the campus was improved by a bridge across the Kidron on what is now 27th Street.
- In 1903 a threshing stone was acquired by Bethel. Henry Richert had it made in the East and had used it at one time to thresh enough grain to secure straw of the proper length to thatch roofs, since machine threshed straw was too short for that purpose. He gave the threshing stone to his son-in-law, C. H. Wedel.
- Const: Back in 1895 an electric bell system was installed. Money had been donated earlier for a large bell to be hung in the bell tower of the Main Building. But the tower was abolished so the money was used to install a program clock in the Main Building which operated the bells in all the College buildings.
- Stud: With the bell system came a gremlin or goblin or a little man of some kind who has been jinxing that and every succeeding bell system.
- Fac: What page are you on?
- Const: A bell rang for rising. (Bell rings and Menno goes through motions of arising.)
 For morning devotions. (Bell rings and Menno drops to his knees.)
 For 45-minute recitation periods. (Bell rings and Menno sits in a chair, dozes, pulls out his watch and finally bell rings again.)
 For evening devotions. (Same routine.)
 And for retiring. (Bell rings)
- Menno: I keep hearing bells! I can't stand it. I wasn't made for this modern, machine-regulated way of living. (He rushes off.)
- Const: In 1898 the telephone was installed in the Main Building
 (The phone rings.)
- Menno: (Shouts into phone) This is Bethel . . . I'll go get her. Hold the phone, it will take awhile. She lives over in Ladies Cottage. (He leaves the receiver dangling.)
- Const: While he goes after the party being called, let us go on with the story.
- Fac: The hot-air heating system was replaced in 1902 by steam heat, but it took until 1907 for the gas main to come to the campus so that the kerosene lamps could give way to gas lights.
- Const: And in 1910, fire escapes were added to the Main Building, just in time, too.
- Stud: Yes, a Dean once got locked in the Dean's Office and had to crawl through a window and go home by way of the fire escape.
 (Annie hurries in in a state of dishevelment.)
- Const: But let's go back to 1898 and the telephone.

Annie: (Shouts) Hello. Yes, this is Annie. No, Mama, I wasn't planning to come home this weekend. You are going to butcher? No, I am not planning to come home. Scraping casings makes me sick. (A rather long pause, during which she holds the receiver at some distance from her ear.) Yes, Mama, I am planning to come home.

(Stage lights go off.)

Stud: Bethel grew. Enrollment figures exactly doubled in a 17 year period. In the year 1909 there were 186 enrolled.

Fac: The faculty changed and increased. The number also doubled. P. J. Wedel began teaching in 1903 for a career of 40 years in the fields of science and history. D. H. Richert began in 1906 and continued until 1946. Many other dedicated teachers came for briefer periods.

Const: What did the students of those early days prepare for? I understand that they were not taking college-level courses.

Fac: Oh, students had many choices of curriculum. In 1899, for example, one could enroll for ten different courses of study, including the college preparatory course, the German-English academy course, the Normal school course which prepared school teachers, the Biblical Institute program, the college course (2 years), and then there were special courses which did not rank with the regular academy work. These were the music, fine arts, debate and elocution, and commercial departments.

Const: That sounds like a lot of courses for a little school and only 5 or 6 faculty members.

Stud: "In 1899 three classes had one student each. This difficulty of small classes continued for many years."

Fac: And here is an interesting note: "In the early years the problem of adding courses was taken care of mostly by adding an extra load to any instructor willing to offer himself as a sacrifice."

Const: I wonder what this class in fine arts was like. Why couldn't you get credit for it?

(Lights go on for a class with instructor and several girls.)

Mrs. Krause: This class is called Art Needle Work, and we will complete a number of projects. You can try embroidery, cut work, point lace, crocheting, tatting, and artificial flowers made of crepe paper.

Annie: Mrs. Krause, could we do knitting in this class? I would like to make mittens and socks.

Mrs. K.: I have not included knitting and I will tell you why. I think most any girl already knows how, or she should. Then, too, this course is to teach an appreciation of beauty and I think these other activities are of a more aesthetic nature. You may also be interested in Miss Wirkler's class in water color painting, wood burning, and china painting.

(Lights move to another part of the stage. Professor Welty is talking to a group of students.)

- Welty: Students, we offer the following courses at Bethel in the music department. Piano, reed organ, singing and harmony. Music is not to be merely an ornament of life, but it should be a part of a complete education.
- Menno: Prof. Welty, will we have to give a recital?
- Welty: As part of your musical training, we believe that recitals are helpful. Could we expect you to favor us with a rendition on the reed organ next month, Mr. Ens?
- Henry: When will we get the pipe organ that we have been raising money for?
- Welty: I am glad you asked that question. We now have \$1,000 in the fund and we hope to have the organ very soon.
- Pete: How will it be operated? Does someone have to stand back of it and work the bellows?
- Welty: Oh, gentlemen, this will be a modern organ. There will be a gasoline engine in the basement which will run a rotary fan blower. And this will be the first pipe organ in Newton.
- Menno: How about a band, Prof. Welty? I think we should have a band and wear uniforms and everything.
- Henry: Ach, a band at Bethel! I will be put out of church if I play in a band.
- Welty: After many hours of discussion, the faculty has decided that this year we may start a band. We will play religious melodies at the close of the rendition of Hayden's Creation.
- Menno: And will we wear uniforms?
- Welty: No uniforms. Furthermore, students, you must have your parents' consent.
- (Lights fade and go up on another part of the stage. Students are sitting around in a bull session eating popcorn and sausage.)
- Pete: This sausage is kind of greasy, ain't it?
- Henry: Well, I don't mind that so much, but I think Pa's hand was heavy with the pepper in this batch.
- Menno: As I was saying, the trouble with this school is that they don't let us have any fun. Take football. Even to play intramural, you have to have 85 per cent average grades.
- Peter: That leaves me out. But my Pa won't let me play anyway. He says if I need exercise, I can walk home evenings and milk the cows.
- Henry: Well, I think the thing wrong with this school is the food. We never get anything decent to eat. The zwiebach don't taste like Ma's.
- Pete: But that's not so bad as the fact that there is nevery anything to do around here. No social life.
- Menno: You can go to the literary society tonight. What are they debating about? Anybody know?

- Henry: Resolved: "Fire is more important to society than water."
- Menno: Why don't they get some debates that are interesting? The one they had last week was pretty good. "Who suffers most, the man who marries a woman he does not love or the man who loves a woman he cannot marry?"
- Pete: That one made about as much sense as "Which is better, a belt or suspenders for holding up your trousers."
- Menno: I'll bet they would get some interesting debates if they would let the ladies debate.
- Pete: A woman has no more place standing up to debate than she does standing up in front of church. No sirree. The college is right. A woman's place is not on the debating platform.
- Menno: Well, I think devotions would be more interesting if they let the men and women meet together. They go to church together.
- Pete: Sure, they go together and they go away together, but the women sit on one side and men on the other, as they should. But if you are talking about things wrong with this school, you can mention chapel. It is monotonous and uninteresting.
- (Lights go off.)
- Fac: The scriptwriter must have jumped fifty years. I can't imagine one of the saints of 1900 complaining about chapel.
- Stud: It says so right here.
- Const: There were many "firsts" to occur during the administration of C. H. Wedel. The first issue of the School and College Journal, the official publication of the Board of Directors, edited by David Goerz; the establishment of the college museum, organization of the Bethel College Church; the pipe organ in the chapel; the Bethel Deaconess and Hospital Society, selection of the college colors of maroon and gray; and the first summer school session.
- Stud: And the first summer school Dean was D. H. Richert (Uncle Davy.) There was one instructor and there were six math students.
- Const: President Wedel in his tenth annual report to the Board of Directors says:
- (Lights on podium.)
- Wedel: (Reading) It still remains to be proved whether our people are able and willing to maintain a college, even a modest one. There has been a discouraging number of changes in the faculty; there are marked differences of opinion in the constituency with policies of the faculty; there has been a rather slow growth in attendance.
- However, there are encouraging signs: We can report that here at Bethel College we have no life endangering ball games and no nonsense of college yells.
- A fair percentage of students are serving Mennonite churches. More than 600 students have gone out from Bethel College to leaven and

exert a wholesome influence on Mennonite communities. We are told that the footprints of Bethel students can be seen in the churches and already they are a power for good in our communities.

Const: A wide-spread interest in missions resulted in the establishment of a Bible Institute and Evangelists course. The first missionaries to go out from Bethel College were Rev. and Mrs. P. A. Penner and Rev. J. F. Kroeker in 1900. In 1906 Rev. and Mrs. P. J. Wiens also entered the mission field in India.

Fac: A major concern of the Board was that there was a growing indifference toward religious work among our young people. Regret was expressed that so few young men seemed called to the ministry.

Stud: Is that in the book? I thought that was a modern concern.

Const: We have come to the end of an era and the passing of the pioneers.

Fac: With the death of C. H. Wedel in March, 1910, his work was carried on for the remainder of the year by an administrative committee.

J. H. Langenwaller was persuaded to accept the position as acting president for the 1910-1911 school year until a permanent successor could be found. He faced many problems. Many demands were made of him.

(This is a chant for two groups of voices.)

Students: Add to the curriculum.

Faculty: Add to the faculty.

Studs: Reduce the student load.

Fac: Reduce the teaching load.

Studs: Liberalize and specialize.

Fac: The library is out of date
and so it doesn't circulate.

Studs: The extra-curricular
ought to be more secular.

Fac: English is the tongue to shun.

Studs: Let's be more American.

Fac: Strengthen their Bible knowledge.

Studs: We want a four-year college.

Const: Dr. Langenwaller's first administration opened upon a crisis. Decisions had to be made which everyone recognized as far reaching. The faculty and Board met together on this occasion to discuss a pressing problem.

(They are seated around a long table with Langenwaller presiding.)

P.J. Wedel: But, Brother Langenwaller, we have this petition which the students presented to the Corporation meeting last fall. They are vitally interested in adding the fourth year to our three-year college program so that they can complete the A. B. degree. We must give this petition serious consideration.

Riesen: I agree. But at the same time we must be practical. Are we ready to add the burden of teaching the extra courses? How can the Bible and natural science departments teach a heavier load?

- Lang: We are under heavy pressure from the constituency to increase our offerings in the Bible department.
- Haury: If we become a four-year school, we must do something about our library. There are three thousand books there unclassified and uncatalogued.
- Riesen: There is no doubt in my mind that if we offer the A. B. degree, we will have to hire more instructors and they should be specialized in their fields.
- Miss Martin: I don't see why we cannot go along as we have. We have been doing all right. We can't afford this extra expense. Where will the money come from?
- Lang: It is clear to me that not to go forward on this matter is to go backward. We could resign ourselves to becoming a junior college, but that would mean that we would not be serving our constituency. If we are to hold our young people, we must offer four years of college.
- Riesen: We cannot do it.
- Wedel: We must do it.
- (Silence)
- Haury: Brother Langenwalter.
- Lang: I would like to call for a drink of water.
- Penner: Yes, indeed, this is going to take a lot of water. (He goes out and we hear the sound of a pump. He brings Haury his drink.)
- Haury: And now I would like to call for the question.
- Lang: The motion is that we hire four additional instructors and offer a four-year college course. How many vote aye? (Raising of hands.) Opposed? The motion carries. Thank you. With this step forward, Bethel College will be able to maintain a position among the leading colleges of the country.
- (Lights fade.)
- Fac: In his one year as acting president, J. H. Langenwalter guided the college in a number of steps forward.
- Stud: The library was moved from the northeast corner of the first floor (now the president's office) to what is now the public relations area. Men and women were allowed to study together.
- Const: The ladies glee club started giving programs in the neighboring towns but we of the constituency watched carefully to see that the programs were in accord with Mennonite principles, since the instructors of voice were non-Mennonite and we didn't want them giving worldly ideas to our Mennonite singers.
- Stud: Here is a song written by D. A. Hirschler and P. H. Richert, "A Bethel Song." I would like to hear how it sounds. In English.

(Lights come up on a girls' group who sings the song, p. 187.)

Fac: Oratory and debate came into their own. A student could now receive college credit for oratory.

Const: Bible became a required course for English speaking students as well as German speaking, so that Bible had now to be taught in English.

Langenwalter served in an interim year, but it was an important year for setting trends for a bigger and better Bethel. But there were many heartaches and headaches still ahead.

Fac: So here we are through the first 18 years of the history of the school and we still do not have a graduating class.

Stud: Let's take an intermission here. (To audience) Come back in ten minutes. We have many unanswered questions. Will Bethel College survive the two World Wars? the Depression of the 30's? Will Bethel College survive Herman Bubbert?

INTERMISSION

Part III - PROBLEMS OF A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE, 1911-1932

(The three readers come on stage and shuffle through books and papers as the audience settles down.)

Stud: It says here that the next decade was one of the stormiest in the history of Bethel College.

Const: Well, I will admit that the first administration of J. W. Kliever was worse than most.

Fac: Shall we begin? (Reads) "J. W. Kliever accepted the call to be acting president of Bethel College. An alert personality, a keenly analytical mind, and an unusual ease and clarity of expression made him in many ways the peer of men with much greater academic training."

Stud: Then why was his administration so stormy?

Fac: For one thing, he inherited many of his problems, and then there were added those that came with the growth of the school.

(The chant is repeated by students and faculty.)

Students: Add to the curriculum.

Fac: Add to the faculty.

Studs: Reduce the student load.

Fac: Reduce the teaching load.
Better labs and better books.

Studs: Better meals and better cooks.

Fac: Academic salvation
Lies in Accreditation.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: The subject of accreditation could not be ignored.

(President Kliewer and state inspector walk around looking things over.)

Insp: Yes, you have a fine little college here, President Kliewer.

Kliewer: We are glad to hear you say that. Now what advice do you give us as we start to work toward accreditation by the State Board of Education?

Insp: I would say the first step is to increase faculty salaries.

Kliewer: Yes, I am sure we must do that.

Insp: And the endowment fund.

Kliewer: And the endowment fund.

Insp: Of course, you will try to improve your instructional facilities, but your special need right now is a science building.

Kliewer: I know we need a science building.

Insp: I will write you a detailed report from the state office. Goodbye for now. (They shake hands and part.)

(Professor Kliewer turns and is met by P. J. Wedel.)

Kliewer: Ah, Brother Wedel, we have much work ahead of us.

Wedel: What did the state inspector say?

Kliewer: Most of our needs go back to our poor financial position. We will have to exhaust all possibilities to raise enough money just to meet current expenses. Brother Wedel, you know how distasteful the problems of money raising are to me.

Wedel: I am sure that all of us would rather be about the business of teaching than out raising money. But there is a more pleasant subject: we need to plan for the first graduating class of Bethel College.

Kliewer: Brother Wedel, I am going to ask you to meet with the class and plan the commencement program. I understand that they have some ideas of their own on this subject. Don't let them get too radical.

(Lights fade and come on on another part of the stage. Wedel and six students are having a meeting.)

Isaac: One thing we are agreed on that we don't want: senior orations.

Wedel: But I think the public will expect to hear from each of you. And if you each speak only about twenty minutes, the program won't be too long.

Galle: But we want a commencement speaker from outside.

Regier: And we want the commencement speaker to speak English.

Kliewer: And we want separate exercises from the Academy. We are big boys now.

Wedel: Oh, these suggestions are very radical. I am afraid you will be disappointed. But let us see what we can arrange.

(Lights out for a moment, and back on again.)

Wedel: Now how does this sound: The Academy will have its commencement on Monday and the College Day on Tuesday. We will compromise on the matter of senior orations. There will be only three speeches from the Senior class and written papers by the other three.

Regier: And President N. E. Byers of Goshen College will be the commencement speaker if we can get him and he will speak in English. But we must have someone to speak in German.

Wedel: (Shakes his head) I wonder what the constituency will think of this. An English commencement speech!

(Lights out.)

(Lights come on to show two women settling themselves in chairs, each with a program.)

Fannie: I thought a body should try to attend this first commencement, not that I have any graduates. Nice day for it, isn't it.

Sarah: Land, you couldn't have kept me away. I want to see what a plain Moundridge boy looks like after he gets a Bethel College degree.

Fannie: What do you suppose they will all do for a living? I understand four of them want to be preachers. Where will they find churches?

Sarah: Well I'm sure we can't use them in our church. Their education will be too fancy for us. They will have to go outside the Conference.

Fannie: Shh. It's going to start.

(Lights fade and come on to show another part of the stage where the six candidates are lined up in cap and gown facing President Kliever.)

Fac: At the close of the program, President Kliever handed diplomas to M. J. Galle, Moundridge, who became a General Conference minister.

(As each name is mentioned, he steps forward to receive his diploma and a handshake.)

J. M. Regier, Moundridge, General Conference minister.

P. R. Schroeder, Mountain Lake, General Conference minister and later president of the General Conference.

J. F. Isaac from Moundridge became a relief worker and missionary to India.

A. J. Regier from Mountain Lake served in the field of education at Bethel College from 1927 to 1947. Mrs. Regier is now in charge of the college bookstore.

J. C. Kliever from Idaho was in educational work and government service and business, both inside and outside Mennonite circles.

(Welty leads audience in hymn, "God Be With You.")

(Lights fade.)

Const: Many people asked the question: Would Bethel graduates find a place to serve the Mennonite denomination. Or was Bethel training young people who would seek other churches, other communities?

Fac: But it was never the intention of the founders of Bethel College that all of its students prepare for work in the General Conference only. God's work goes on beyond the confines of denominationalism.

Stud: I must say I am relieved. After 19 years of operation, we have a college graduating class.

Const: The next question to be asked, of course is, "What would a degree from Bethel College mean? Was it recognized by other schools.

(Lights come on to show two women quilting or knitting.)

Sarah: They are making a big fuss about accreditation at Bethel College.

Fannie: Land sakes, what is accreditation? A new course they are teaching?

Sarah: No, no. It is just that the college wants to be recognized by the State Board of Education.

Fannie: (Sniffs) The state you say? What does Bethel College want to do with the state. Nothing good can come of working with outsiders.

Sarah: I doubt if we will have to worry about it. The rules are too strict. A college professor has to have a salary of at least \$1,000 a year if the college is to get accredited. And they need more books and laboratory equipment to meet the requirements.

Fannie: Did you say \$1,000 a year? Why, that is more cash money than Frank and me see, and we work for our living.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: But the faculty and students pushed toward this goal of state accreditation. Salaries somehow were gradually increased and books and equipment were found.

Stud: And on January 25, 1916, a special chapel service was held.

(Lights come on to show podium with three men sitting behind it. Pres. Kliever comes forward.)

Kliever: This is indeed an occasion for rejoicing. I have here a letter that I would like to read in part: "We would inform you that at a meeting of the State Board of Education, Bethel College was formally approved and placed on the list of colleges accredited by the State Board of Education. Graduates after this date will be entitled to make application for state certificates."

(Cheers and applause from the audience.)

We all realize that this is an important milestone in the history of Bethel College. I will ask Ed Kaufman from the senior class to speak on the significance of this action to the students.

Kaufman: I believe we are all aware of how the accreditation of Bethel College by the state will enable our school to take its place with other educational institutions of Kansas. Now teachers can qualify for state certificates without further examinations. Our credits can be transferred to other schools on the same basis as any other school. Bethel College graduates can enter other professions, medicine or engineering, or go on for graduate work without losing credit earned here.

To celebrate this occasion, the faculty has agreed to dismiss classes this afternoon and we will have a parade to Newton. We will have a marshal on horseback carrying the new Bethel College maroon and gray flag. The band will be out to play, and we want every student to be in that parade. We are proud of Bethel.

(He is seated amid cheers and applause.)

Kliwer: There is one more item on our program this morning. Professor Schmutz has written a new song for this occasion.

(A group of men file up to the stage, either from the audience or from the wings, and Schmutz steps forward from his place to lead them in the Alma Mater. While they are quietly taking their places, Student reads off their names. Ed Kaufman becomes part of the group.)

Stud: Do you recognize any of these names: Earl Eymann, Jac Goering, A. M. Lohrentz, Joe Becker, Harry Becker, J. J. Voth, Menno Nickel, W. A. Schroeder, Paul Baumgartner, Ed Kaufman, Marvin Schmidt, Emil Regier, Irvin Haury, A. G. Isaac, D. V. Unrau, Luke Horsch, Ernest Penner, Gus Gaeddert.

(After the song, lights fade amid much applause.)

Stud: Well, that episode wasn't so stormy, although I suppose meeting those requirements was a test of school unity.

Const: Ah, but the stormy part is yet to come: World War I.

Fac: (Reading) Bethel's relations with the City of Newton had been quite cordial, but with the coming of World War I, those who considered themselves the special guardians of American principles and ideals found at Bethel a number of threatening situations.

Chorus: (One group faces another group.)

I Speak English. If you don't know it, learn it.
If you don't like it, get out.

II But we are Americans.

I Not if you speak German.
You are unpatriotic. You are spies, probably.
Speak English.

II For 400 years we have been German. In Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, and Russia, we have been German. It was the first sound we heard when we were born, and we died with a German prayer on our lips.

I German is un-American.

II Is French un-American? Or Swedish or Italian?

I Speak English. If you don't know it, learn it. If you don't like it, get out.

II What do you want us to do?

I Stop! Stop all classes in the German language at Bethel College.

II For the sake of peace, English will replace German.

I Discontinue the German department.

II For the sake of peace, there will be no German taught.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: Of course, there were many other effects of the War. Enrollment dropped as men left school to work on the farms or for the army.

Stud: Most of the Mennonite men who were drafted chose sanitation work, and theirs was a hard life.

Const: Yes, the First World War took its toll, but it was not more disruptive than the war within the institution itself.

Fac: It started with a chapel talk given by a younger faculty member who questioned the date and authorship of the book of Daniel.

Const: The challenge came from another faculty member also in a chapel speech.

(Light on the podium.)

Prof. Ens: The young professor was wrong yesterday in what he said, and he should retract his statements. Little did I think that openly in the Bethel College chapel we would have this worldly criticism of the Bible. I will ask that President Kliever dismiss this man. He has had too much education in a progressive seminary. He is unorthodox and dangerous. I believe every word of the Bible means what it says. The streets of heaven are made of gold - just like the gold of this ring. The book of Daniel

(Lights fade.)

Const: President Kliever was unable to mediate this controversy and it was laid before the Board. But they dismissed the charge of unorthodoxy on the lack of sufficient evidence.

Fac: A number of resignations finally resulted from this controversy, including the complaintant's, the defendant's, and President Kliever's.

- Const: The Board of Directors found themselves in the middle of an argument. Students, faculty, congregations, and alumni all had a point of view.
- (Lights come on to show a meeting of several Board members.)
- Chairman: I have called this meeting of the Board to consider a letter from the faculty. They ask some questions and I feel that they deserve an answer. I will ask the secretary to read it.
- Sec: "Gentlemen: We the undersigned members of the faculty of Bethel College wish to have the Board of Directors declare themselves upon the following issues, and upon their answer to these issues will depend our willingness to serve as teachers for next year."
- Suderman: Does that mean that the rest of them will resign?
- Sec: "Does the Board take the attitude that the more a man has studied the Bible and its history, composition, etc., the more dangerous a man he is?"
- Penner: How do we answer that?
- Chair: I'd say no, unless such a person is a doubter or a disbeliever in the Bible. (Murmur of agreement.)
- Sec: In particular, does the Board consider these men dangerous in whose hands is the religious leadership of our school?
- Penner: The fact that the Board continues their employment should answer that question.
- Sec: Does the Board have the fullest confidence that interpretation of the Bible as given by the men referred to above is just as authoritative and reliable, or even more so, as the interpretation given by any lay-member?
- Suderman: I would say yes to that.
- Penner: In as far as these men are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as I believe these men are.
- Sec: Does the Board have the confidence that these men are competent enough to determine whether any members of the faculty entertain unsound or heretical views?
- Chair: I believe we have and we must express this confidence in our faculty.
- Penner: But the questioners must realize that the Board is responsible to the Corporation members and to the churches and has the determination in such matters.
- Suderman: I hope the faculty is assured of our desire to understand the questions raised. Perhaps we should hold consultations with them.
- Chair: And we also have a letter signed by about 30 students asking us not to release two instructors involved in this controversy.
- Penner: Ach, as if we do not have enough trouble, the students are on our necks.

Pres: But there is more to come. The Alumni Association is threatening to hold off support to the college because of these happenings.

Sec: We are really between two fires. The constituency and alumni accuse the Board of unorthodoxy and lack of unity and agreement on matters of faith.

Suderman: And on the other hand the faculty and students accuse us of narrow mindedness and of trying to set limits on Bible interpretation.

Sec: And of supressing scientific research. Such a tight rope we balance on.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: The whole experience was weakening in many respects, but it did have its values. The Board prepared a statement of its position on fundamental questions which the Conference approved. The relationship between the alumni association and the college was strengthened.

Const: But the storm waves were slow to subside: President Kliever was under attack.

(Lights go up to show Fannie and Sarah quilting again.)

Fannie: But everybody is talking about i. They say he will have to go.

Sarah: But he seems like such a good man, very high minded.

Fannie: Yes, I think he is. But he is too easy on unorthodox Bible teachers. And science teachers.

Sarah: Henry says the Mennonite Men's Conference has asked the Board to examine the books in the library. They have books in that library that would make your hair stand on end. It is dangerous to expose young minds to books like that.

Fannie: What kind of books?

Sarah: I don't know. Books that say the Bible ain't true, I suppose.

Fannie: And there's the money problem. The college gets deeper in debt every year, is what I hear.

Sarah: What do you suppose they do with all the money they collect here in the churches?

Fannie: I hear they use it to raise the faculty salaries.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: President Kliever resigned in 1919 to accept the call of the Mission Board to visit the India and China fields.

Everything considered, he was entitled to much more credit for the forward steps that had been taken during his administration.

Stud: Where were they to find a man willing to step into such a discouraging situation?

- Fac: J. E. Hartzler was the man of the hour, and he stepped in for a brief but vigorous administration.
- Const: After launching an ambitious program, Dr. Hartzler resigned after one year to become President of Witmarsum Theological Seminary at Bluffton.
- Fac: This resignation was a shock to everyone. Dr. J. H. Langenwalter was called--
- Stud: Hold it. There are some things about the Kliever-Hartzler era that ought to be mentioned. Although this was a time of great financial hardship, there were buildings added and improvements made.
- (He adds silhouettes to backdrop.)
- Const: In 1911 the Mission Board helped build Mission Home, now known as White House, which greatly relieved the housing congestion.
- Stud: After 52 years of hard use, may she rest in peace.
- Fac: In 1911 J. W. Kliever built his home which now houses Miss Becker and the Bargins. And J. H. Langenwalter built his home. It is now known as Welty home and the Walter Klaassens and Miss Winslow are living there.
- In 1914 Uncle Davy Richert built his home and he still lives there.
- Const: Probably the greatest building event of the time was Alumni Hall built in 1914 to meet the demand for a gymnasium and auditorium. It cost \$11,000. It was used as a gymnasium for twenty-five years until Menorial Hall was built and the Museum was moved into it.
- Fac: A gift of \$4,000 from Mrs. Isaac Leisy was used to build Leisy Home. It was called Das Deutsche House and the income was to go to the German Department.
- Const: Did they build that big house for \$4,000?
- Fac: No, the cost exceeded the donation and the total was \$4,750.
- Const: That was in 1915, and building stopped, but in 1921 the Goerz Home was purchased with its five acres of land. There has always been much sentiment attached to this place, as it was the home of David Goerz, founder of Bethel College. It reflects the graciousness and dignity of its era and has always been the show place of the campus.
- (Student returns to his stool.)
- Const: In 1912 with the enthusiastic support of the City of Newton Chamber of Commerce, money was subscribed to bring city water to the campus.
- Stud: The campus no longer had to depend on wells that often ran dry. There was water for fire protection and the simple ritual of the Saturday night bath became easier.
- Fac: Also in 1912 the electric power line was brought to the campus.

(A street light goes on suddenly to reveal Menno and Annie sitting on a park bench, wide apart but about to kiss. They jump up and run off in confusion.)

Const: Important as these utilities were, running water and electricity, another service created more of a stir when it was brought to the campus in 1913.

(Lights show two students at a study table. A third rushes in.)

Menno: Why are you sitting here? Come see the Interurban. It is chugging right up to Western Home.

(Clanging of the bell is heard offstage.)

Come on, we can take a ride. The officials of the line are on it and the Newton Commercial Band, and there's going to be a program on the steps of the Main Building. (They rush out.)

Const: And indeed the interurban came right up Main Street on the east side, entered the campus at 27th Street and turned around for its trip back to Newton.

Fac: It was a good idea, but it didn't pay off. In 1920 the service was discontinued and the problem of transportation between Newton and the campus is with us still.

Stud: Oh, we have a transportation problem only during Leap Week.

Const: Some things didn't happen. In 1912 the Board voted to replace the chairs in the chapel with pews, but the money was not available.

Fac: And in 1918 the students protested against the sewage disposal system, but there was a financial crisis just then.

Stud: But in 1913 a Grafonolo was given to the Music Department for help in teaching Music Appreciation.

(Students roll it on and play it. Several students sit around and listen appreciatively.)

Fac: And a hectograph was added in the President's office, really about the only piece of office equipment, in 1916.

Const: And in 1919 an electric washing machine was donated to the college.

Stud: Are we still using it?

Const: There was excitement. In 1918 the boiler in the Ladies Dorm exploded.

Fac: The athletic program began to thrive. The new gym was a great help and girls physical education was permitted, even though the proposed wing for a girls' gym never materialized.

Const: Here is a picture of a class in action. If this was in 1919, Mrs. J. F. Moyer, then Helen Isaac, was teaching it.

(See p. 288 for costumes. Miss Beecher's class in Calisthenics will perform with Rockette precision. A couple of prying boys will have to be sent on their way by the instructor.)

(Lights fade and come on again.)

Fac: Who is this young couple walking along Main Street toward town?

Stud: The young man is John Thiessen, but I don't know who the girl is. He wouldn't tell us in his chapel talk.

John: I am very happy that you were able to go to town with me tonight. It takes courage to ask a young lady for a date, you know, especially when you know the house mother is listening.

Annie: And it takes courage to ask the house mother for permission, you know, especially when you know all the other girls are listening.

John: Professor Davy Richert has a joke about the Ladies Cottage. He says the boys have been calling it the Beehive.

Annie: Why do they call it the Beehive?

John: Because so many of the fellows have got stung there. (Laughs uproariously.)

Annie: I don't think that is a very funny joke.

John: Ah, no. I guess it isn't. (But he keeps laughing.) Say, I hope you don't mind walking. I guess we could have taken the interurban.

Annie: Fiddlesticks. I like to walk. Perhaps we can take it coming home.

John: Ah--yes. Of course, maybe after sitting through the picture at the Royal, we will be glad to walk.

Annie: (Who is perceptive.) Oh, certainly. Maybe we will.

John: Just wait here while I buy the tickets. (He goes up to the box office.)

Ticket taker: That will be twenty cents. (He feels around in his pockets for his purse but finally realizes that he has forgotten it.)

John: Never mind.

(Back to Annie.)

John: I guess I forgot my purse. My money is all lying on the bureau in Western Home. I am sorry, Annie. I guess there is nothing to do but walk back to the campus.

Annie: (Takes his arm.) Oh, well, never mind. That is what I told the house mother: that we were going for a walk.

(Lights fade.)

Student: Now we are ready for the Langenwalter administration. Here is a copy of the Bethel College Breeze. The next year it was changed to a more dignified name, the Bethel College Collegian. We have an item here about the recall of Dr. J. H. Langenwalter to the presidency. I read:

"Other presidents we have respected and admired, worshipped in their turn, but him we love. To him we are all individuals, not just units in a larger group."

Const: What were the problem in the fall of 1921 that President Langenwaller inherited?

1. Faculty changes. About half the faculty had resigned for one reason or another the preceding spring.
2. A constituency still ruffled by the religious storm.
3. The question of control: should the college be run by the corporation or the conference.
4. An \$8,000 deficit and an ambitious program set in motion but barely begun.

Student: That ever-present financial problem! Everybody talked about it, and everybody knew what to do about it.

(Lights come on to a student bull session.)

Menno: What this college needs is a town that really supports the college. Look at McPherson, what it does for McPherson College. The city ought to raise that money for the deficit.

Pete: Now, Menno, calm down. Things are better than they were during the war. And the Chamber of Commerce is going to put on a drive this year to raise funds for a music hall and to help with current expenses. Newton is doing pretty well by the college. The Evening Kansas is running that series of articles about it now..

Menno: Well, maybe what this college needs is a good ever-flowing oil well. Then they could lower the tuition.

Henry: If they raise the tuition any more, they will lose this poor student.

Menno: Poor meaning you don't have any money, or poor meaning you don't have any brains?

Henry: You are getting off the subject. On top of everything else, they expect us to donate to college causes. What this college needs is a full-time field representative to raise this money we need so much.

Pete: What this college needs is a full-time Rockefeller on the Board of Directors.

(Lights fade.)

Const: The Board talked about it.

(Lights go up to show three members of the Board.)

Chair: This financial problem is too big to be handled by the financial committee. Now let's see what is the picture at the end of this first year of the new administration.

Treas: We have put aside the expansion program until we can reduce our deficit, and we have made encouraging progress there. We have covered the deficit of last year and we have still \$6,500 remaining from previous years.

- Regier: The Alumni Association subscribed \$1,700 for current expenses. I think that is encouraging considering their temper of a few years ago.
- Chair: But the sad fact is that this amount is only a fraction of what we need to make this the school that it should be. We need a gift of six figures to double the endowment fund and to build the facilities needed here.
- Treas: The only solution I can see is for the Board to put on an all-out campaign to raise a large amount of money. I added up here what we need and it is in the neighborhood of \$210,000 for a Science Building, a heating plant, classrooms, and better sanitation and housing.
- Chair: \$210,000! That will shock the constituency. They are not used to thinking in terms of 6 figures.
- Regier: How about tuition? Wouldn't we improve our position if we raised the tuition?
- Chair: There would be protests from the parents. I have here a letter from one deploring the high cost of education. They say it costs their son \$250 a year to go to Bethel College.
- Regier: Perhaps they should keep a closer check on what their son does with his money. He surely must be squandering some of it.
- Chair: We should decide today whether we must hire Mr. Dean who offered his services in carrying on a financial campaign. After we raise money for current expenses, the Science Hall takes priority.
- Treas: There is another problem. The \$100,000 that the Conference turned over to Bethel College for the endowment fund. They are afraid that we will spend that money for current expenses rather than keeping it invested. There is talk that some of the people would like to have it turned back to the Conference. If they insist on that, that will be the end of Bethel College.
- Chair: Let us give them no cause to worry.
- Regier: Back to the subject of Science Hall--
- (Lights fade.)
- Fac: This need was the most pressing and the subject was discussed at Corporation meetings, Alumni meetings, Founders Day programs, and Conference sessions. On Thanksgiving Day, 1923, a meeting of students and ex-students was held.
- (Lights go up.)
- Brand: We have already collected one-third of what we need for the new Science Building. Now if we alumni could raise \$35 each, we would have the amount. Is this asking too much for a project that is so vital to our Alma Mater. We need \$35 from 3,000 people. Miss Riesen, the secretary of this meeting, had agreed to send out letters to all former students.
- Edwards: I would like to be the first to contribute my \$35 to this campaign.

- Brand: Fine, fine. We have our first contribution. What is your name?
- Edwards: Ensign Edwards of the Newton Salvation Army, former student.
- Penner: And here is mine. And I would recommend to the Board of Bethel College that they begin construction of the building immediately.
- (Applause from group. Lights fade.)
- Const: And miracuoulsy work did begin. The ground breaking was held December 19, 1923.
- Stud: Students contributed labor and building continued until the following April when another problem stopped progress.
- Fac: Bethel had to have a heating plant. The old one was inadequate for present needs to say nothing of furnishing heat for a new building. The Corporation decided, some thought courageously and some thought rashly, to borrow enough money to finish building the heating plant and the Science Building.
- (Lights go up to show student talking to P. J. Wedel as they work over a simple lab set-up.)
- Menno: Professor Wedel, my father wanted me to ask you why we are building such a large science hall. It will be big enough for 2,000 students and here we are with an enrollment of about 300.
- Wedel: Menno, when we get 500 or maybe 600 students using this building, we will be hollering for more room.
- Menno: I'll tell him that, but he will still think it is big enough for 2,000 students.
- (Lights fade.)
- Const: Bethel got its Science Hall and a new heating plant, but the many burdens of the presidency were too much for Dr. Langenwaller. He was forced to resign because of ill health. Probably the greatest contribution to the office aside from the improvement made in the physical plant was the improved relations between school and constituency. Misunderstandings and suspicions were removed to a large degree.
- Stud: (Leafing through the book.) Who took Dr. Langenwaller's place as president?
- Fac: For the next academic year, no one. An administrative committee ran the school.
- Const: The heating plant was ready for use in 1924 and the Science Hall in 1925.
- (Student adds heating plant and Science Hall to back drop.)

It would be appropriate to draw in a black cloud of debt over the campus at this point. This debt was to plague the college through the twenties and thirties.

But don't misunderstand me; the building of Science Hall was a forward step for Bethel College and one of the highlights in its history.

Fac: While you are changing the face of the campus, move Minnesota Home over behind the Ad Building and make it the present Music Hall.

Stud: OK. Remind me to put a swing set here in Kidron Park where Minnesota Hall used to be.

Fac: One of the major improvements of the interim was the separation of the college from the academy. E. B. Wedel, father of Dr. Arnold Wedel, was made principal of the Academy and other professors were assigned to one or the other areas.

Another change that was made was not so readily accepted. We observe a faculty meeting. An unidentified member of the faculty has the floor.

(Lights go up.)

Z: I heartily, I vehemently, object to this resolution of the Committee on Registration and Credits. I view with suspicion and alarm this movement to allow these non-academic, non-intellectual, specialized, vocational subjects to invade the sacred precincts of the liberal arts curriculum.

Y: I repeat my reasons for sponsoring this resolution. These courses are no longer considered special departments in other liberal arts colleges. They are fully accredited in the eyes of the State Board of Education. And if we are to be admitted to the North Central Association, we will have to give these courses full status.

Z: There is that organization mentioned again, the North Central Association. Why can't we Mennonites run a school without outsiders telling us how? Indeed, to allow these courses the same status as Greek, literature, Bible, and mathematics makes me feel that Bethel College is in its last stages of deterioration.

Y: I call for the question.

Chair: There is a call for the question. Those in favor of the recommendation of the Committee say aye.

(A nodding member of the faculty jerks awake and asks his neighbor--)

X: Hey, hey. What are we voting for?

Y: The resolution is that we allow the departments of music, art, and home economics equal status with other departments in the liberal arts curriculum.

X: Aye, Aye. (Others respond also.)

Chair: Those opposed?

Z: No, no.

Chair: The motion is carried. Students in music, art, and home economics will receive the same academic credit as they do in other courses.

(Lights fade.)

Stud: There is one dramatic bit I would like to insert here. I'm not sure in which year it belongs.

Fac: Is it historical?

Stud: I'm not sure of that, either. It may be more folklore than history.

Fac: Let me remind you that this is a historical pageant.

Stud: Yes, I know, but this was told to me on very good authority. It seems that once Professors David Richert, J. E. Doell, and P. J. Wedel went to Topeka to attend a meeting. And when they got their tickets for the trip back to Newton--

(Lights go up to show a ticket window and the three men buying their tickets.)

Richert: We want tickets to Newton.

Agent: Here you are, but hurry up. That train leaves in two minutes.

(They pick up the tickets, but Richert unknowingly drops his as he hurries ahead of the others.)

Richert: Hurry up, you dignified professors. We have to make this train.

Doell: (Picks up Richert's tickets.) Look, Dave dropped his tickets.

Wedel: Just put them in your pocket and come on. That train won't wait for us.

(They take seats in the train.)

Richert: We just made. I thought for a minute we wouldn't.

Wedel: The conductor will be in here right away. Do you have your tickets ready?

Doell: Mine is right here. Do you have yours, Dave?

Richert: Sure, right here. Or here--(Starts looking through all his pockets.) Now where did I put it? You fellows saw me buy it. Where did I put it?

Wedel: Did you lose it?

Richert: I must have. What will I do? I don't have enough money to get another ticket. Could you fellows help me out?

Wedel: Sorry, but I'm about broke.

Doell: The hotel room in Topeka cost more than I had figured on. But listen. Why don't you crawl under the seat. You are small enough to hide there. I will drape my coat over you.

Richert: I can't do that; it wouldn't be right.

Doell: But we all know you bought that ticket. It isn't as though you were trying to get by without paying. Come on, get under there. Here comes the conductor.

(They push him under and sit back to read the papers.)

Conductor: Tickets please.

(They hand him their tickets.)

But you gave me three tickets. Where is the third person?

Doell: Well, he is our friend, and he is very shy. (Lifts the coat a bit to show his friend.)

Conductor: (Stooping down to peer under the seat.) You can come out, little boy; no one will hurt you.

(Richert crawls out, dusts himself off with great dignity and takes a seat at some distance away. Conductor scratches his head and Doell and Wedel return to their papers as the lights fade.)

Fac: Shall we return to the book? There are graver matters to consider, I'm sure.

Const: (Reading) When it became apparent that Dr. Langenwalter could not return to his duties, Dr. Kliwer answered the call to the presidency for a second term. He remained in the office from 1925 until 1932.

Fac: Dr. Kliwer's second administration was troubled by the same large problems as the first.

Const: He was not able to reconcile the liberal and conservative elements of the constituency, though probably he himself was inclined toward the conservative type of thinking.

Fac: Some of the discussions in faculty meetings have a familiar ring. Just the other day in a recent faculty meeting, someone asked the question: Just what is our policy regarding student absences? This was one of the questions that came up periodically.

(Lights come up to show a faculty meeting.)

Wedel: Mr. Chairman, just what is our policy regarding student absences? It seems to me that this spring we have had an excessive number of absences. Last week I had several students go home to plant oats. Another was gone to do student solicitation.

Doell: One of my students was absent for a whole week on a preaching mission. And some were gone on the choir tour.

Richert: And track meets and field trips.

Miss Bixel: All of those have legitimate excuses. What should we do about the ones who don't have a good reason for not coming to class?

Wedel: Or come when they should have stayed in bed where they could sleep more comfortably.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: And then another question that I heard expressed just the other day: Why don't we at Bethel College hold Saturday classes?

(Lights come up to the same scene as before.)

Doell: I think we should discuss again the question of Saturday classes. I feel that some students are avoiding my class in Biology because we meet on Saturday morning.

Chair: Perhaps a little review would be in order here. Some of you remember that in 1913 we made a great effort to do away with Blue Monday. We met classes from Tuesday morning through Saturday noon, a four and a half day week. For some time now we have been offering some classes Monday afternoon because of a crowded schedule. And now some instructors are asking to have Saturday morning classes changed to meet on Monday morning.

Doell: I move that we go on a regular five-day week meeting classes Monday through Friday.

Wedel: The students will vote it down. They did the last time we tried it. They always try to arrange their classes so that they don't have to meet either Saturday or Monday.

Miss B: I second Dr. Doell's motion.

(Lights fade.)

Stud: Listen to this: "The catalog of 1932 lists the Bethel College Community Chorus, the Music Club, the Men's Chorus, the Ladies' Choir, the Men's Quartet, the Ladies' Quartet, the a Cappella Choir, and the Band." The Music Department must have come into its own.

Const: The a Cappella Choir under the able direction of W. H. Hohmann received not only state-wide but national recognition. It has toured the country from Oklahoma to Canada and from California to New York.

(Lights go up to show the choir. Dr. Hohmann directs them as they sing "There is a Balm in Gilead," one of his original numbers, and another of Dr. Hohmann's choosing. The Student announces the numbers.)

Stud: Among the student body of 1931-32 were six foreign students. In the last 30 years, students from other countries have made unique and valuable contributions to the college life. We take them for granted now, expecting them to understand Bethel College students, Kansas Mennonites, and American people in general. Undoubtedly, we have demanded more understanding from them than they have received from us.

Fac: In 1927 the chapter was closed for the Academy. Financial difficulties, lack of students, the focus of interest on the college, account for its closing. Including the years at Emmatal and Halstead, the Academy had had a life of 25 years. It had played a leading part in the higher education of Mennonites, for 3,000 students had attended.

- Const: In 1929 the stock market crashed. The New York disaster had repercussions that reached to Newton and Moundridge and Goessel. Farms and businesses were hurt. Bethel College finances, always insufficient, were now even more uncertain. The future grew darker as enrollment fell.
- Fac: But there were bright spots. In 1925 a drainage ditch was built across the northern edge of the campus. This relieved the flooding of roads and basements.
- Const: The home economics laboratory was completed in 1929.
- Stud: And in 1930 the chapel chairs were replaced by seats.
- But let's get back to the financial problems. Students usually have the answers to problems like this.
- (Lights up on a bull session.)
- Menno: I know the college needs more money and I know the answer. We need more students. Why don't they get out and get more students to come here?
- Henry: You know why they don't get more students. Bethel College is not accredited by the North Central Association. If we were, we could get more students and more tuition money.
- Pete: And do you know why we are not accredited? We need a better library, more laboratories, and more endowment.
- Menno: So what it comes back to is the fact that we need more good hard, green cash.
- (Lights fade.)
- Const: Other people had answers too.
- (Lights come up on a street corner where two men are talking.)
- Epp: The solution to this problem is obvious: turn Bethel College into the Newton Junior College. Newton wanted the school moved here from Halstead, remember, back in 1888, and promised to raise \$100,000 for it.
- Unruh: I hear that that plan has been considered, but it raises more problems. Who would control the school? Is that what Goerz and Krehbiel and Wedel had in mind, a Newton Junior College?
- (They are joined by Brandt.)
- Brandt: Good morning friends. You are in such deep discussion. You must be talking about Bethel College.
- Unruh: We were just talking about turning it over to the city of Newton.
- Brandt: Some of us have a better idea. We think we should get all the peace colleges together, Friends, McPherson, Hesston, and Tabor, combine faculties and facilities and have one first-rate school.

- Unruh: Or even combine the Mennonite schools. Why have three schools in this small area?
- Epp: I don't think it would work. When have one group of Mennonites trusted another group of Mennonites enough to work with them?
- Unruh: Oh, it can't be that bad.
- Epp: Well, I think we will have to do something. They say that the debt is growing. It is over \$100,000 now. I think we friends of the college will have to get behind this thing.
- Brandt: My neighbor is not buying a new car this year. He is going to give that money to current expenses.
- Unruh: It will take a lot of friends like that to get the college on its feet.
(Lights fade.)
- Fac: The faculty had a few ideas, too.
(Lights come up to show two professors discussing the situation.)
- Hofer: And the debt now stands at \$121,986.02. Why, what kind of credit does the college have with a debt like that?
- Goertz: Some of us are agreeing to donate 10 per cent of our salaries if this money will be used to meet North Central standards. Could we count you in on this?
- Hofer: Ten per cent of what little I get? Man, you are asking for a real sacrifice. But if the others can do it, I guess I can too.
- Goertz: We will also look at our departmental expenses to see where we can save money. The faculty is beginning to realize that this situation is most serious. And so is the Board.
(Lights fade.)
- Const: Bethel College found itself in a situation that was even more difficult than it was at the beginning of the project. Steering a ship through rocks and shoals is more difficult than is the original launching.
- Fac: Bethel College had more or less made its transition from a Bible college to a Christian liberal arts college. Over 1,000 teachers had received their training at Bethel, as well as many missionaries, ministers, doctors, and people in other professions. Bethel was serving the Mennonite church and the cause of Christ. What was its future?

Part IV - THE LAST 30 YEARS

- Fac: During these critical years, President Kliever had repeatedly expressed a desire to be relieved of his duties. In March, 1932, he turned in what he considered his final resignation and the Board accepted it. The presidency was becoming more and more a business proposition, he felt, and he preferred the classroom or the pulpit.

The Board accepted his resignation with an expression of "gratitude for the long period (16 years) of faithful service." He continued to serve as pastor of the Bethel College Church.

Fortunately the faculty of Bethel College had at this time on its staff a man who was recognized by both the Board and the faculty as most nearly meeting the requirements of the position. Ed. G. Kaufman had to decide between the presidency of Bethel College and that of Witmarsum Theological Seminary. But once he decided to stay at Bethel, he threw the whole weight of an energetic personality into the task before him.

Stud: In 1932 he inherited a campus with 14 buildings and 15 private dwellings, a student body of 285, and a debt of \$141,000.

Const: That debt of \$141,000. That falling enrollment. That annual deficit. The faculty and Board decided that they must take a realistic look at things. Times were not getting better, as they had hoped.

A five year plan with ten points evolved. The Graymaroon called it A Systemized Dream of the Future. It covered the whole range of college problems from A to C: Accreditation, Budget, and Constituency.

Fac: How to bring this dream to reality? Details were much discussed in faculty meetings, and most of the discussion was about money.

(Lights go up to show the same faculty meeting.)

A: Here we are trying to cut our expenses and we go and hire a business manager. As far as I can see, his job is to make a budget and insist that we fill out purchase requisitions. Doesn't the administration trust us? And we are told that if we purchase equipment without approval, the cost will come out of our own pockets. I call this a limitation of academic freedom.

Chair: Thank you for your opinions. Anyone else have something to say on this subject:

B: We agreed at our last meeting that our aim was to limit our expenditures strictly to our income. Our brother should realize that we cannot do this kind of accounting without budgeting. If an organization is to run on a businesslike basis, someone must oversee the purchases.

Chair: Thank you. Could I call on the committee who is to bring recommendations about faculty salaries.

C: We come with these suggestions. We all realize that during the early 20's when enrollment was rising, our salaries were increased. And now enrollment is down to what we hope is the lowest point; we believe that this is a financial crisis in the history of the school. If the deficit continues, the school will collapse. We recommend that for next year the faculty not ask for a stated salary but accept a percentage of income from tuition.

(A buzz goes up among the faculty.)

We recommend also that as partial compensation, faculty members who are Mennonites be given membership certificates in the Bethel College Corporation.

A: But can we eat these certificates?

B: I would second the motion of the committee. All of us here believe in our school and in the part it has in the training of young people. I personally have always felt that teaching at Bethel College is a call equal to that of the ministry or missionary and that I can serve the cause of Christ in no better way. Are we ready, then, to make certain sacrifices for the school and the Kingdom.

Chair: All those in favor of the motion say aye.

(A chorus of ayes.)

Chair: Now how about this offer that we have to buy fixtures for the museum on very reasonable terms. Dr. Wedel asked me to bring the proposition before the faculty.

Wedel: Mr. Chairman. I would like to withdraw my request for this equipment. This is a large sum of money. While the faculty has agreed to sacrifice salary in this time of hardship, I think we should not buy these fixtures which are not, after all, essential to the life of the school.

Chair: All right. I would like to have Mr. Graber, our business manager, give his report to the faculty.

Graber: I thought the faculty might appreciate hearing some of the plans of the business office.

First we are planning to reduce tuition in an effort to attract more students. We as faculty members are not the only ones feeling the pinch of the depression. Farmers, businessmen, parents, and students all are suffering.

A: But that will reduce our salaries even more if we are paid on a percentage.

Graber: But along with this reduction, we will ask that students pay their bills promptly. We will require interest bearing notes if they cannot pay. We will offer discounts for paying on time. We will also allow families discounts for those having more than one student in school. For those coming more than 100 miles to Bethel, we will pay part of the transportation.

A: That is discriminating against Goessel students.

Graber: And we will make every effort to hire as many students as possible in jobs around the college.

A: Did I see a sack of potatoes in the business office today?

Graber: Ah, yes. We will accept farm products in payment on account. One of the students offered three hogs. Could we interest any of you in a butchering?

(Chorus of offers.)

Graber: There is another item that concerns the faculty. The Sam Schneider Oil Company has offered us a business deal. The faculty will sell gasoline coupon books to their friends. The college will receive one-half of the income from the sale of these books. Everyone uses gas. Ask your friends to use Sam Schneider Gasoline.

(Lights fade.)

Const: As you can see, no stone was left unturned, no opportunity neglected to better the financial position of the college. And these small efforts paid off.

Fac: Bethel College Fellowship groups, Booster banquets, On-to-Bethel Clubs were organized. The investments were re-evaluated. Faith in the institution returned as Bethel College began to operate within its income, and even to reduce the debt.

Const: We cannot discuss all the problems and achievements of an administration of 20 years, but there are some that must be mentioned.

One major problem was that of accreditation.

Fac: Although Bethel College was accredited by the State of Kansas and its graduates were eligible for scholarships inside and outside the state, it was working toward accreditation by the North Central Association. The first attempt was made in 1931.

(Lights go up to show three or four professors with Sage.)

Sage: We think you have a fine school here, but in my report to North Central Association I will recommend postponing accreditation for another year. In the meantime, try to build up your faculty with more Ph. D's and Masters, raise faculty salaries, and increase the endowment.

Chair: This recommendation is no more than we expected, and the study has been very worthwhile.

(They shake hands and lights fade.)

Fac: And then again in 1934.

(Lights go up to show same group.)

Sage: The North Central Association has changed its standards somewhat since your last examination. We are interested in the policies an institution is pursuing, its spirit and its purpose.

We find that Bethel College has great strength in a number of areas. But there are these weaknesses:

- (1) Lack of financial support from church and community
- (2) Pitifully low salaries
- (3) Too great a teaching load per faculty member
- (4) An inadequate health program
- (5) Need for buildings and repairs.

a

We think Bethel College has/well defined constituency and field of service and will work out a satisfactory status.

Chair: That is what we have believed ever since the college was founded. We will apply again.

(Lights fade.)

Fac: Efforts were redoubled, and 1938, application was made again.

(Same group.)

Sage: We find these elements of strength this time in our examination:

- (1) The faculty ranks high in training and is alert and vigorous in every phase of academic program.
- (2) The curriculum is substantial and dignified.
- (3) The program for the admission of students is well conceived and carried out.
- (4) The health service has been greatly expanded since the last examination.
- (5) The science building would do credit to any college campus.

We will recommend that the committee accept your application for North Central Association accreditation.

Chair: Thank you. This will be cause for much rejoicing by students and faculty and friends of the college. Accreditation is not an end in itself for us, but a step forward in a larger program of Christian education.

(Lights fade.)

Const: This was 1938, the 50th anniversary of the corner-stone laying of Bethel College. There was much to celebrate.

This was the end of the first five-year plan. While not every phase of this five-year dream had become a reality, an encouraging growth and improvement had taken place.

Accreditation had been won in the North Central Association.

And this October 12 marked the laying of the cornerstone for Memorial Hall, just fifty years after the laying of the cornerstone for the Administration Building.

Stud: The Golden Anniversary celebration was climaxed by a pageant of 19 scenes summarizing the history of Mennonites and of Bethel College.

Fac: Should we re-enact it at this time?

Stud: No, I think a pageant within a pageant would be confusing.

Const: Memorial Hall was conceived in commemoration of the early pioneers of this Kansas community. The idea interested many people of the community and of the larger constituency. It was built by many people. 1,500 persons contributed labor in one form or another. The students gave active help to the project. Many small gifts of money and a few large ones built Memorial Hall.

- Fac: The building was finished and dedicated in March, 1942. It stands as a symbol of constituency support to Bethel College.
- Const: 1942. World War II brought its disasters and difficulties to the world and to the campus.
- Fac: Once again Bethel College and the Mennonite church were called upon to pay a price for "conscience sake," for their belief in the principle of religious freedom. The price was not as great as during the First World war, since the Selective Service Act gave the conscientious objector legal status.
- Stud: There were far reaching effects of the war, some of them good.
- Fac: Seven Mennonite colleges got together to organize the Mennonite and Affiliated College Association. This organization has helped to unify Mennonite objectives.
- Stud: The war gave a greater vision of service to Bethel College students and alumni. Doors were opened to parts of the world never before dreamed about. C.P.S. was good training ground for relief work, Pax service, and mental health programs. We all learned more about how to translate Christian love into social service.
- Fac: And after the war came the students. Enrollment doubled the first year. There were more men, more married students, and more foreign students.
- In 20 years the campus changed and grew.
- (Student adds buildings to the backdrop.)
- Const: The college farm was added in 1934 and 35. The Thierstein Home and Krehbiel Cottage were added to the college property in 1935; Kliever Home and the Pines in 1937. These homes were purchased or donated at this time.
- Memorial Hall in 1942 was the major acquisition.
- In 1947 the Ladies Cottage was moved and transformed into the Health Center.
- In 1947 the Franz General Farm Shop was built.
- And the college duplex was moved in on 24th Street.
- In 1948 the old dining hall was moved west across the highway and became Maple Hall.
- The Grattan Building was completed in 1949 and the Post Office was moved from the basement of the Ad. Building and the Press was moved from the Science Hall.
- Kidron Cottage in 1951, and finally the library in 52 and 53.
- Fac: There were other improvements, only a few of which we can mention.
- The threshing stone was adopted as official symbol of Bethel College; a curtain was added in Chapel and the Chapel remodeled; a new organ

was purchased; the Historical Library was established; the Ladies Dorm was officially named Carnegie Hall, and a 22-passenger bus was donated to solve the transportation problem; the first homecoming queen was elected; and Bethel, for better or worse, adopted the quarter system; and the town name changed from Bethel College to North Newton.

All this in the 1930's.

In the 1940's the Memorial Hall Series was started, the Mennonite Bible Academy was opened--and closed three years later. The Kaufman Museum was moved in and became a tourist attraction for this community.

And on October 14, 1945, Founder's Day was celebrated with a Thanksgiving Program. The college debt had been liquidated.

There was the first issue of Mennonite Life; work day was inaugurated, and the campus roads blacktopped, and the faculty started having retreats.

- Const: The Alumni were first called together in 1894, but it was during the 1930's that the Bethel College Alumni Association began to take an increasingly active part in the life of the school. Alumni Hall had been their first major project to that date, and it had taken 14 years after the building was built to pay for its construction. They had given much help in raising money for the Science Hall, and they have made substantial contributions to every building program since then.
- Fac: The Bethel College Fellowships deserve more than a line of credit. They have assured the college of a dependable amount for current expenses each year.
- Const: And the Women's Association has been another great source of strength. "Never underestimate the power of a woman," a slogan that has proved true in this instance. When their many projects are added up, we find that the women friends of Bethel College have raised \$ by offerings, dinners, bazaars, and food sales.
- Stud: Did you know that there is a section in the book on student pranks? Some of them that are related here are still being laughed about when alumni get together.
- Const: (In evident enjoyment.) Like the time we reported a poker game to the Dean of Men and he rushed over to find a group of us playing with stove poker. I still remember the look on his face.
- Fac: I remember when I was in the school we were going to play a basketball game in another town, see, and the coach lectured us before the game. We were not to swipe any of the property from the dressing room. Well, we didn't, but guess who did--the coach. Somebody put a shirt in the bottom of his bag, and there spelled in big letters--McPherson College. You should have seen his face.
- Const: My uncle tells this one: The principal went upstairs to see why a light was still burning at 10:30 in the boys' residence. A student came charging down the dark stairs, bumped into the principal and grabbed him, and yelled, "Your money or your life."

But Professor Wedel took it in stride. He calmly said, "No, bin ich deen in eine Mordengrube gefallen?" Well, have I fallen into a den of thieves. Ol' Menno let him go mighty quick, I tell you.

Fac: Did I ever tell you about the time--

Stud: Ahem--Some of the pranks were embarrassing to students and teachers, costly and inconvenient to the school. But the harmless ones added spice to the routine of student life.

(Lights go up to show a professor in the classroom.)

Harder: I would like to take roll today. I still have not identified some of your faces with your names.

(Someone answers "here" as he reads the names.)

Abrams, Adrian, Albrecht, Bartel, Becker, Buller, Bubbert.

(No answer.)

Herman Bubbert.

Menno: He isn't here today.

Harder: Claassen, C., Claassen, D., Claassen, F.

(Lights fade and come back to show another scene. The same professor is with his wife at home.)

Harder: (Lowers paper to remark to his wife who is reading.) This is strange. Here is an announcement of the engagement of Herman Bubbert, and I had decided that he was a fictional student. He is never in class when I call roll.

Mrs. H. Is he engaged to anyone we know?

Harder: Miss Wilcie Mae Knutz from Hesston. Do you know anyone named Knutz?

Mrs. H. No. There were some Kneusts where I grew up, but no Knutz.

Harder: Well, I am going to turn his name into the Dean's office if he isn't in class tomorrow.

(Lights fade.)

Voice: (Over intercom) Herman Bubbert, telephone. Will Herman Bubbert please answer the telephone? I am sorry, Herman Bubbert is not in the dorm.

(Lights show a desk in the Business Office.)

Jane: On this credit slip from the Dining Hall there is vacation meal credit for Herman Bubbert. Do we have an account for Herman Bubbert.

Annie: (Leafs through her files.) No, nothing like that here. I'll bet he has been going to class and eating at the dining hall and hasn't been in to see about his bill.

Jane: Put a sign on the bulletin board telling him to report to the Business Office.

(Lights fade.)

Stud: And so the legend of Herman Bubbert grew until he became a living person, or almost.

Fac: I think he should either graduate or officially withdraw from school.

Const: We come to the end of the book. Important things have happened since 1952, but we cannot look at them with the perspective of time. Almost every one of us here can remember back eleven years, and we don't like to think that anything so current is history.

President Kaufman, after 20 years of guiding the college through periods of crises, growth, and stability, resigned. D. C. Wedel accepted the call and served for seven years. J. W. Fretz was acting president for one year until Vernon Neufeld accepted the position in 1960.

(Slides are shown.)

Stud: Growth has continued during this period. The new library has made its great contribution to our academic life.

41

The Goering Hall for men was the first step in supplying adequate dormitories.

37, 36, 38

The addition to the Museum increased its value.

49

Fac: Part of student life is the Bethel College Church. We almost take its beauty and spaciousness for granted now, but not we who once called the Chapel our church.

72, 70, 6

Changes have been made in the appearance of the campus. The first step in a long-range plan for landscaping was the removal of the road south of the Administration Building.

14

The more recent additions have been the new wings to the dorms.

17

And the next will be the Fine Arts Building.

90

Stud: Of course our college is made up of more than buildings and landscapes. Let's put some people in these pictures.

They go to the Inn.

47

They go to church.

71

They study in the library and in their rooms.

42, 76

They participate in drama,

88

Picnics,

74, 66

Sports,

81

Orchestra and choir.

86

They give banquets,

85

And elect homecoming queens.

84

This is Bethel College--the very old, (Goerz Hall)

5

And the new.

(Fine Arts) 90

Const: What next? New buildings, new students, new faculty. We hope there will be new ideas and new horizons. John Thiessen said in a chapel talk that during the first 75 years we have thought largely in terms of local and national affairs. The next 75 years will see a greater interest in international affairs.

The idea that David Goerz and company had of Bethel College was a large idea, some thought too large for such a small denomination.

Were they guided perhaps by this idea of Daniel Burnham's:

Make no little plans;
 They have no magic to stir men's blood
 And probably will not be realized.
 Make big plans;
 Aim high in hope and work,
 Remembering that a noble, logical diagram
 Once recorded will never die,
 But long after we are gone will be a living thing,
 Asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.
 Remember that our sons and grandsons
 Are going to do things that would stagger us.

(New Alma Mater to be sung by quartet.)

Litany or prayer.

Second verse of "The Work is Thine."

